

FRIDAY , 07 APRIL 2006
No. 13177

This site is updated every Tuesday

SINCE 1952

ATHENS NEWS

GREECE IN ENGLISH

[ABOUT US](#) | [SEARCH](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#) | [ADVERTISE](#) | [E-MAIL US](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [BOOKSHOP](#)

athens**arts + features**news

news

business

arts & features

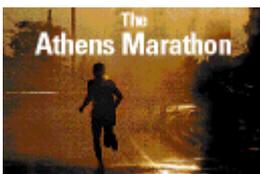
sport

travel

letters to the editor

community

useful info



Door-to-door artistic visions

The Kappatos Gallery's annual meeting of contemporary art brings under oneroof the work of 40 artists, transient tenants of a central Athens hotel

CHRISTY PAPADOPOULOU

THE SETTING is a hotel room on the third floor of a central Athens hotel. The reception hall is bathed in burgundy-red light where, going past the porter, you are treated by a waiter wearing lipstick to a shot of lemoncello straight out of the bathroom that has been temporarily turned into a bar. Then the red curtain is drawn and customers/viewers in small groups of five take their seats around the dance floor where Angel the Stripper, clad in a tight outfit and high heels, performs her sensual number.

Arts



Enniamorfo dancer 'suspended' between heaven and earth

It could be a case of art imitating life, but Lida Patta's performance, like most of modern art, makes more sense if you know the underlying concept. The performer stands for ephemeral youth and beauty but as a stripper is no more than a commodity. Patta suggests a parallel with the art world's current state where an artist's success is to a great extent dependent on a network of art managers, collectors, curators, critics, journalists and sponsors. In this show, curators have chosen all the artists, except in Patta's case, where it is the artist who has chosen her curator (Michail Iliou, who also plays a role in her show), thus subverting the usual hierarchy.

Upon exiting the room with a sense of unease, the viewer seeks refuge next door where the Enniamorfo dance group's poetic performance is underway. A video projection on the ceiling shows a man's repeated movement as he is laying roses in a circle around the object of his desire. If this serves as a heavenly tryst, back on earth, in the hotel room's bed, a woman plays out the fall - the aftermath of love - in her ritualistic, almost autistic, pacing back and forth on the bedtop. She preserves the memory of heaven by repeatedly marking her territory with stamps of roses and spreading around paper cutouts with the word "love" printed on them.

Refreshing and unconventional, both performance art pieces are part of the

Kappatos Gallery's group show *Visions 06*, currently on at the Athens Imperial Hotel. The idea, which first took form eight years ago and has since developed into an annual meeting of contemporary art, ventures out of the confines of the museum halls and gallery spaces that traditionally host works of art. This time around 30 curators, art historians, architects and choreographers, among others, have selected 40 mainly Greek artists to use the impersonal space of a hotel room as a canvas for the expression of a personal vision. "The choice of a hotel for the exhibition's presentation," points out gallery owner Gerasimos Kappatos, "enables the artists' autonomous existence in the same space along with allowing a work of art to take over its own private and public space." Another goal is to highlight the relationship between the local and the global.

The techniques employed by the artists vary from the more traditional painting to photography and video screenings, dance performances and architectural projects. Some of the artists have chosen to incorporate parts of the room's structure in their artwork as is the case of Maro Avrabou and Dimitris Xenakis, who use the hangers in their rooms' cupboards as "props" to hang pieces of illuminated fabric reminiscent of the human skin imprinted with metro maps of metropolises like Athens, Paris, Seoul and New York. The travellers' routes take the form of veins in the human body. Katerina Diakoumi turns the bed sheets into a surface for a black pencil print, its expanding labyrinthine structure alluding to Ariadne's myth.



Mark Hadjipateras' playful, yet ironic, 'Fun with IKEA'

Urban themes are a popular choice among participating artists. Among the minority of the artists who have selected painting as their medium of expression, Despina Stokou, who lives and works in Berlin, captures the sense of homesickness in a series of paintings rendered from her own photographic studies of fragmented scenes of daily life. Lydia Andrioti has covered the room's window with a print on Plexiglas, projecting video segments on it with scenes from the client-customer interaction in a brothel district in Metaxourgio. Preoccupied with the notions of space and landscape, painter Nadia Kalara takes an architect's approach. This is evident in the composition of her photos, their digital processing, even in the incorporation of fragments of written text in her pictures.

Some of the works featured in *Visions 06* exert an immediate impact on the senses. There is Themis Bazakas' apple-scented oasis of white punctuated with clusters of the forbidden fruit and pencils left for the visitor to leave his/her own writing on the wallpaper in the room. Dimitris Xonoglou's bed strewn with bread loaves makes the connection between the craving for food and love, which prompted a humorous question from one viewer: "Did you bake the loaves yourself?" The most hermetic and alienated piece was Elena Poka's inscrutable installation which claims to exist in its own right, independent of the surrounding environment.

At the opposite end stands Mark Hadjipateras' site-specific installation bringing design into art. Curated by Alexandra Koroxenidis, his work has been made exclusively of IKEA products, which have been rearranged into a playful, yet ironic, comment on personal and impersonal space. The hotel room is given a "personal" feel by the addition of carefully chosen home furnishings, microsculptures made from the company's products, as well as painting-like photos of IKEA's wares. Yet, these touches are all the result of mass-generated commodities, which once again jeopardise the notion of individuality by offering the illusion of choice.

** Visions is on at the Athens Imperial Hotel (Karaiskaki Square, Metaxourgio, until April 19. Open: daily 2am-10pm, weekends included. For further info contact the Kappatos Gallery (6 Agias Irinis St, tel 210-321-7931)*

ATHENS NEWS , 07/04/2006, page: A26
Article code: **C13177A261**